DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 295 420 FL 016 594

AUTHOR Holzman, Judy Myers
TITLE Development of an Introductory Commercial Spanish Course: Collaboration of the Mead Packing Co. & Kennesaw College.
PUB DATE Apr 86
NOTE 8p.; In: Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions (see FL 016 586).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Business Administration; *Business Communication; Cooperation; *Course Content; Course Objectives; *Course Organization; Higher Education; Introductory Courses; *Languages for Special Purposes; *School Business Relationship; Second Language Instruction; *Spanish; State Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Kennesaw College GA

ABSTRACT

A collaborative effort of the business community and Kennesaw College (Georgia) resulted in the development of and implementation of an introductory commercial Spanish course that has been successful in introducing students to business practices in a Spanish-speaking environment. Previously, a translation service had been developed by the colleges' foreign language department to serve a local international trade center, and it was from that effort that interest in a commercial Spanish course emerged. A survey of business and language majors identified a substantial target audience and helped to pinpoint special considerations in course development, such as the lack of business training of most language majors and the limited time in business majors' schedules. A review of available materials revealed appropriate materials but no single text, so the course developers wrote 10 units with supplemental cultural readings and practical exercises. During the second time the course was taught, guest speakers from the business community were invited to the class. The success of the effort has convinced the language faculty of the value of a school-business collaboration. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED295420

DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTRODUCTORY COMMERCIAL SPANISH COURSE: COLLABORATION OF THE MEAD PACKING CO. & KENNESAW COLLEGE

DR. JUDY MYERS HOLZMAN

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
KENNESAW COLLEGE
FREY LAKE ROAD
MARIETTA, GEORGIA 30061

(404) 429-2846

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

gVoght

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL016594

This paper will describe a collaborative effort of business and academia that resulted in the development and implementation of an introductory commercial Spanish course at Kennesaw College. The course, as measured by student, teacher, and community evaluations, has been successful in its attempt to introduce students to business practices in a Spanish speaking environment. This joint business-academic collaborative effort now serves as a model for development of all commercial foreign language courses at our college. Details of the formation of the collaborative, methodology used for course development, and the resulting course content will be described in this paper.

Kennesaw College, a senior college of the University of Georgia System, is located 22 miles north of Atlanta in Cobb County. Cobb is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. In the past ten years both the metropolitan Atlanta area and Cobb County have greatly increased activities in the international field.

One major indication of increased international awareness in our community has been the active support of the Cobb Chamber of Commerce for the creation of the new Cobb International Center. This International Center was built by the Chamber of Commerce in order to offer services to the now more than 80 international businesses located in Cobb County and to increase international awareness in the community.

One service of the International Center, translation and interpretation, was the result of a collaborative effort between members of the Cobb business community and the Kennesaw College foreign language faculty. During frequent meetings to discuss development and implementation of the translation services, language faculty and members of the business community had opportunities to share on a profound level their hopes and concerns regarding foreign language study. Members of the business community expressed concerns that too few students of foreign languages developed practical language skills for business, and the language faculty expressed concerns that too few in the community understood the commitment required for mastering a second language. One result of these discussions was a decision by both groups to collaborate in the development of a commercial language curriculum at the college.

Spanish is the largest foreign language program at Kennesaw College, and the Atlanta area has a high concentration of businesses owned or managed by native Spanish speakers. Because of this, it was decided by the collaborative group of language teachers and community international business leaders that the first course to be developed in the commercial foreign language program would be introductory commercial Spanish. Furthermore, this course would serve as a model for the development of future commercial courses at the college.

During the meeting concerning the translation services of the Cobb International Center, Mr. Octavio Orta, Director of International Marketing for the Mead Packaging Company,

and Dr. Judy Holzman, coordinator of the College's foreign language program, agreed to meet once a week for six months to discuss development of the introductory course. Mr. Orta, a native Spanish speaker, was aware of the lack of commercial emphasis in traditional language programs and was most anxious to assist in developing a commercial Spanish language program. Dr. Holzman, trained in a traditional literary language program, was anxious to have Mr. Orta's practical advice for the development of a strong commercial program. Both were deeply committed to a joint academic-commercial effort in the development of the course. This committment often involved extensive weekly meetings or long-distance telephone discussions when Mr. Orta's work required out of town travel.

The first issue in this effort was identification of the target audience. Study of other commercial language programs in the United States revealed that there was not a great deal of consistency in entrance requirements for introductory commercial language courses and even less consistency in the content of such courses. This review of other programs led Orta and Holzman to the conclusion that the target audience would be determined by studying the particular needs of the Kennesaw College student and the particular needs of area international businesses.

A survey of all business majors and language majors at the college indicated that both majors were very interested in such a course. Mr. Orta was very anxious to attract business students to the study of business conducted in a language other

than English. However, business majors thought that the many course requirements of their business curriculum left little opportunity for fulfilling the prerequisites for commercial Spanish. The survey also indicated that most language majors had never taken any business course.

The survey was a useful planning tool not only for the introductory course, but for future program development in commercial language study. Long range goals included development of intermediate and advanced commercial courses, and the institution of a major program of study in commercial foreign languages. It was hoped that such a major would appeal to both business students and language students and efforts were begun to design a program that would allow business majors time in their curriculum to master basic language skills.

In terms of immediate implementation of the proposed introductory commercial course, however, the survey indicated that the target audience for the course would be language students who had completed basic language acquisition courses. This decision reflected an attempt by Orta and Holzman to balance a concern for the integrity of the course with a concern that course entrance requirements for an introductory course not be excessive.

After making the target audience decision, Orta and Holzman began a review of the literature regarding commercial courses and an extensive review of texts and materials for the course. While bits and pieces of some texts were excellent for our purposes, no one text was found for the particular commercial

course that seemed to serve the needs of the Kennesaw student. Some of the texts were too advanced for an introductory course, and many introduced various aspects of the business world without giving any unifying theme or topic to the course as a whole.

Orta, who daily carried on business with the Spanish speaking world, wanted very much that students understand his world in practice, as well as theory. The more he studied published texts, the more anxious he became to simply tell his story to the students. He envisioned telling the students about a business transaction he had conducted from its inception until its end. At this point it was decided that Orta would write ten units of study which would actually describe in a general manner one of his undertakings in Latin America. Mr. Orta was satisfied that these ten units would give to the course the practical aspect of the commercial language that had been emphasized by the business leaders at the Cobb International Center. Dr. Holzman would supplement these units with cultural reading and practical exercises to develop such skills as letter writing and problem solving in the business world.

A review of the tne units of the Orta-Holzman book shows that the course gives a general, but comprehensive look, into the Spanish business world. The units are: At the office; Telephone Calls and Telexes; Import, Export, Traffic, Shipment; The Bank; The Accounting Function; At the Stock Exchange; Labor and Management; Marketing and Sales, Record Keeping; A Sales Call Abroad.

The book follows the life of a Mr. Eduardo Camacho, a successful Venezuelan businessman, for a ten month period when

he begins and ompletes a successful business venture in Chile. Mr. Camacho is in reality Mr. Orta. By setting the book in Venezuela and Chile we hoped to give the student important insights into Latin American culture. Also, by giving the book one central character and one central business venture it was hoped that the student would retain more of the general material presented. These hopes were more than realized. Students developed a geniune interest in Mr. Camacho, and you can imagine their excitement when at the end of the course Mr. Orta visited the class and revealed to the students that he was, in fact, Mr. Eduardo Camacho. Mr. Orta's presentation impressed upon the students that the skills they were learning in the course could certainly be used in the business world and were, in fact, desperately needed in the business world.

The second time the course was taught Orta and Holzman decided to invite other quest business leaders, familiar with course objectives, to talk to the class. This decision was made because it was obvious that Mr. Orta could not appear in every class using the Camacho book, but it was strongly felt by both Orta and Holzman that the quest business leaders were very important in terms of reinforcing the students' learning, as well as extending that learning. This is the big advantage of a collaborative business-academic venture. The Kennesaw College experiment in collaboration has convinced the language faculty that collaboration should be an integral part of a commercial language program.